THE INQUIRER

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ORGAN OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY AND FREE RELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP

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ON THIS — AND ON THAT

THE Catholic church at lunch time, in one of the busiest streets in Central London, on New Year's Day was crowded to the doors. The doors were wide open. It was possible from the pavement to see what was taking place at the high altar inside, easier to see from the porch. Mass was being celebrated. The central aisle was crowded with people standing. There seemed not to be a vacant space anywhere. To the right, in a not very dark chapel, candles were burning, and worshippers were standing and kneeling among the twinkling lights. Not a sound could be heard from the priest at the altar. He was too far away for the great mass of the congregation. His movements were not dramatic; there was a certain predetermined kind of rhythm about them. The observer assumed that everything was understood by the congregation. Those of them who were not praying were gazing towards the altar, and far more seemed to be looking than praying, although the very look seemed to be a kind of prayer. There was not the slightest evidence of self-consciousness in the congregation; everyone was naturally absorbed in what presumably they knew so well. As the Mass proceeded a young priest at the door had to turn away other worshippers who wanted to get in. He did it jovially, telling them that another Mass was to be celebrated at six that evening, or telling them of another church they could attend.

The observer asked the young priest about the intention of the Mass at this particular time on this particular day. He replied courteously and gently, giving information only since nothing else was asked. The Mass was being celebrated because New Year's Day was the "Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord".

The observer stepped out into the busy street among the lunch-time seekers for food, with buses, cars, open offices and shops, and the usual extra rush and turmoil of the lunch-time hour. Nobody paid very much attention to what was taking place in the church; it was for Catholics only, and that was that. He thought over the words, the "Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord". The priest had used them without any overtone of the possibility of questions about what he had said. They were as natural as "The sun is shining" or that "It is wet today". He was a gentle, intelligent man. The congregation was composed of people no different from the people in the street, save that the congregation was engaged in an act of devotion. The word superstition was the last word to apply to what was taking place.

This Is Impossible

Yet it was entirely reasonable for an intelligent man to dissent from it all with trouble and passion. That the Second Person of the Trinity (a statement itself always regarded as beyond rational comprehension) should will himself to be an infant child, to be born in a peculiar way, different from every other member of the human kind, should as an unconscious infant at a certain place and time will himself to be treated to the physical act of circumcision. That a peasant mother and a carpenter father knowing that they held in their arms the Son of God, literally God himself, eventually to become in the doctrine of the Trinity, the Second Person, should be guided by the will of the infant and without question have the rite performed. That the mother must have known that she was different from any other mother that had existed, or possibly could exist, and that eventually she would be bodily resurrected into heaven, there to be worshipped eternally by all mankind. All this the observer regarded as so beyond intelligent comprehension that it was reasonable to expect the people in the church and the young priest to sympathize with his difficulty. Presumably they do. There was nothing odd whatever in the congregation stepping out from their act of devotion and moving among people who thought what they had been doing (or believing) to be nonsense. It was tacitly assumed that they had some right to believe it.

This, on the whole, is a new situation in what is usually called Christendom. In spite of that packed church the number of serious people who do not believe in the "Feast of the Circumcision" is far greater than those who do. This number on any reasonable estimate is growing every year, and their dissent must be regarded as reasonable and proper as the act of the Mass itself, and that particular occasion for its celebration. In short, Christendom is no longer divided into believers and unbelievers, it is divided—among those who care—into an accepted division among reasonable men about all the facets of the traditional religion.

The Real Crusade

This division is far more serious than other matters which command almost day to day attention. It represents a new form of participation by the human kind in Christendom (and beyond) into the nature of things. And the question must be asked, can the human spirit stand the strain? Strange things have happened during this century. Nobody really knows why the Germans, accepted now as entirely cultivated and civilized people, went Nazi. Nobody knows the inner secrets of the Communist revolution and all that followed. It would be extremely difficult to explain in terms of reasonable comprehension the belligerency between America and Russia. And to come nearer home and risk indignation there is something unpleasant to

some people about the religiosity that increasingly attends the Commonwealth broadcasts on the afternoon of Christmas Day.

Mankind, it may fairly be claimed, *is* mankind because it is religious. Take away religion and everything that is above the animal level goes. It may be that the heroic task of the present, as heroic as any ever asked of the human spirit, is to carry religion into an entirely new situation. The salvation of mankind may entirely rest on that. It may be seen as a crusade of real proportions. To make the division between the old and the new bearable and perceptive, and to carry it into a new world.

HOW A UNITARIAN CONGREGATION IS CREATED

By Stephen H. Fritchman

(Los Angeles usually conveys only one idea to an Englishman's mind. But this article, by the minister of the Unitarian Church there, tells a story which puts many things into perspective. The article has been adapted by the Editor.)

NOT everything about Los Angeles is transient, in flux, unsettled, as some of our friends occasionally think. For eighty years, for example, men and women, children and young people of this religious society of Unitarians have been advocating, and with some real success been practising, a religion of the open mind, the growing conscience, the shared responsibility.

In 1877 a fifty-six year old woman named Caroline Severance gathered a few friends in her home on West Adams Street and proposed the organization of a Unitarian church. She was born in New York State, grew up in that State, married an Ohio businessman, raised five children in Boston, Mass. There she was a friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison and Theodore Parker. She brought a warm, vigorous, intelligent and liberal spirit to Los Angeles in 1879. She was dedicated to the words "The right is the supreme good and includes all other goods". She was not given to metaphysical speculation, nor to elaborate theologizing, nor sectarian arguments between Catholics, Protestants, Jews or agnostics. She was committed to a rich toleration of diverse faiths, asking only that there be room for all to compete for the mind and conscience of the community.

She lived until 1914 in this city, working with astonishing energy for the right as she saw it in scores of interests. While she organized the First Unitarian Church, the records richly prove a far wider range of interests than the ecclesiastical. She brought California its first kindergarten.

Mrs. Severance organized birth control lectures, she brought Kate Douglas Wiggin, authoress of "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm", to start amateur little theatre activities. In Boston she founded the first women's club in the United States and in 1868 she started the Los Angeles Friday Morning Club. She was a gifted advocate of women's rights in church and community. Dress reform, a maternal health organization, women's rights in business and industry, all of these liberal ideas of the late 19th century and early 20th century helped to give Los Angeles its present reputation as a city of tomorrow, a city of many cultures, many traditions and democratic rights for both men and women. Every history of Los Angeles I have read offers its testimonial to the astonishing zeal of this dynamic woman.

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This society of ours here today was started and served over the years by men and women who saw a new kind of civilization being attempted in Southern California, and they had little patience with those who wanted to import stereotypes and patterns from the past, or from other parts of America. While there was, of course, a legitimate enthusiasm to present Unitarianism as a religious way of life which had such familiar leaders as Julia Ward Howe and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the new Los Angeles group that mushroomed from twenty persons to 600 in a few years, preferred to talk about the new kind of community being built here by the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Our present church family of 1,300 has a legitimate pride in the past, but it frankly is more concerned with reproducing, in the next 80 years, spiritual heirs to those giants of yesterday. Venerating the ancients is not a Californian habit, as you all know full well.

Let us take a look at our spiritual principles as religious liberals, principles we have tested for 80 strenuous and often perilous years.

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Religion, when it is mature and healthy, helps us to live today, in this world, facing reality without fear or dissimulation. Our psychiatric counsellors call it "using the reality principle"! This may sound like professional jargon, but the truth behind it is relatively simple to grasp, even if difficult to practise. It says that we need to start our religious living, not with something highly speculative, such as where a man came from, or where he is eventually bound for; rather we should start with the facts immediately around us—we need to know the kind of a world we live in, now in 1958, what we can and cannot do with our time and energies, our talents and particular resources. We need to know who can help us live the good life, and what probable obstacles we may anticipate having to face and conquer.

I am sure that this is true of many other religious groups besides the Unitarians, but I can speak specifically of our own organization. Religion's first task is to help a man or woman face the promising, and the discouraging, facts of this present life, and act upon them with a maximum of success and satisfaction. It is no help to preach a gospel of unbroken progress when we know full well that life includes the fact of advance and the fact of regression—both of them. There is a lot of order in the universe, seasons can be predicted, and even next month's weather—and satellites can be hurled into space so they follow a calculated orbit. But there is chaos as well as order in this world.

We cannot exactly predict the behaviour of the human spirit under tension and tragedy, under pressure of disaster, under the blows of war and unemployment. Some people crack-up, others find a new maturity, some fly into a world of fantasies. Some turn to alcohol, others to drugs.

If we learn, through a responsible religious discipline, that facts must be faced, as the beginning of wisdom, we are well on our way to attaining that emergent aspect of divinity which every person has a right to possess. Whatever religion or creed a man may serve, if his faith performs its full role, it will help him discover his inner moral reserves, it will help him to be truly human and escape the bondage of his purely animal or biological existence, necessary as that surely is. The emergence of divinity, or of full humanity, use either term you wish, is fragile, all too rare and certainly to be cherished.

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Let me put it another way: we are trying, in a liberal church such as this, to keep religion from congealing into divisive dogma, hard creeds that separate folks, to keep from making pretentious claims to final authority, which have a way in history of dissolving under new revelations of ever-newer truths. Among the facts to be faced is the fact that man is often obsessed with a desire to declare himself on subjects about which he can, at best, only speculate. There is hardly a religion that hasn't made this error again and again. As a child of the Judeo-Christian tradition, I have only in later years learned to understand the Buddhist who often prefers silence to speech when confronted with the great questions of existence. Only in recent years have I understood

our Hindu friends, who refuse to define God, who simply say modestly, "Neti, neti. . . ." which translated means: "Not, not, not yet".

There would be very little purpose in our maintaining our churches, of this and other faiths today, unless we believed strongly that men and women like Henry Thoreau at Walden and Louisa Alcott at Concord, both of our own Unitarian household of faith, could say to their fellow citizens: "A better school is needed—a more honest poem must be written—someone must support Mr. Lincoln on abolition of slavery—and do it now". The religious man, if he believes in the power of freedom and independence of life, must live dangerously and intrepidly. He must probe deeply and widely for everything that concerns the promise of human dignity and joy. He must have the stamina and imagination to be himself—hoping to persuade others of his good sense—ready to correct what can be shown to be manifestly impractical or unwise, but ready, if need be, to stand alone. I never cease to cherish those words of our own Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Every human being has a choice between truth and repose. Take which you please—you cannot have both".

FROM MY JOURNAL

By Simplicitas

WE were chatting at the Fraternal today about aptitude for the ministry. John Earnest had said how he had visited his old school to find his headmaster absolutely amazed to learn he had gone into the ministry. "But you couldn't say two consecutive words at school", he said. J.E. admitted it had been so. When the class read Shakespeare aloud he was never more than the herald, and his lord was always at his side before he could get out the few words that announced his approach. Now John speaks ably and to the point, though mercifully his lack of loquacity prevents him from saying a word too much. I thought of dear old P., John's precursor. Among us at the Fraternal he was the shyest of men, yet he was for years a most beloved pastor in Steepholm. Probably, when he went visiting, he let his people talk to him, and that is what one's members always most need to do.

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Y. was letting fly tonight about the progress of the Roman Catholic Church. They have certainly trebled their congregation since I came to Redville. His misinformed vituperation became more than I could stand and I said, "Now, now, Y. Call yourself a Unitarian?" "Of course I call myself a Unitarian, Mr. S.", he retorted. "Haven't I just been telling you, I don't agree with all that flummery down by the canal. I'd run them out of the town if I had my way". They've heard me preach so often about tolerance, that I repeated my constant theme. "I disagree with what you say, but I maintain to the death your right to say it". "You're always saying that Mr. S.", was Y.'s reply, "but I don't reckon to apply it to Catholics!" What can a parson do!

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How we do prop each other up! I had a streaming cold tonight but thought I ought to look in at the recreation club, although Ruth begged me to go to bed with a hot drink. Y. was standing by the door as I struggled out of my coat. "Nobody here yet", he said. "But I thought I'd better come along and support you Mr. S., though it's a bitter cold night". Are all our social meetings really necessary? However, we had long been meaning to take down the organ curtains and with a long ladder to manipulate I don't think Y. is safe doing it alone. At nine o'clock we heated up the pint of milk that was going begging and sat round the gas fire with the satisfaction of a long-proposed job safely accomplished. "You know, Mr. S.", said Y. confidentially. "Between you and me I don't think much of all this here ping-pong as they call it!"

John Earnest is, to say the least of it, put out by the outspokenness of his Northern flock. He went to see an old man the other day who had broken his thigh. "Never mind", J.E. had said sympathetically, "you'll have a good rest while you're here in hospital". "I don't need a rest", was the quick retort, "I'm not tired". J.E. calls that uncouth, and by Southern standards perhaps it is so. But these good Northern folk had a hard struggle in the past to stand up to their somewhat grim environment. They had to disdain any softness of thought or deed and so they made a virtue of necessity. They rejoiced in the starkness of life and felt proud they could take it. When these sharp remarks come from characters tried in that old harsh school, I accept them for what they are, the response of a brave spirit to Life. I hope my defence of these fine folk helps their new minister to accept the forthright speech of Steepholm.

THE UNCLOUDED MIND

By Charles Easton

A GOOD deal of effort has been expended these last fifty years to assist and preserve the dignity of man. The modern citizens of this land, decently clothed, adequately fed and tolerably housed are altogether different beings from the poor drab multitude that used to pass anonymously as the poor. If, however, we are sometimes uneasily aware that we have not produced the enlightened proletariat we had hoped our social securities would nurture, may it perhaps be that we have not sufficiently concerned ourselves with the human mind. If Pascal spoke truly, "All our dignity consists in thought", we must admit we have not yet reached the heart of human regeneration, and the trends of modern life do not help us.

This divine and living instrument of ours, capable of hearing the music of the spheres, occupies itself with the trivial incidents of the street and the idle gossip of the market place. Developed to ponder the meaning of existence, we stuff our minds full of idle rumours and vain speculations. Delicately adjusted to discern intimations of the Eternal, we profane the very sanctuary of our being with sordid newspaper details of crime. How hard it is to forget those things it is worse than useless to remember! How difficult to preserve a freedom of mind in which we may occupy ourselves with the things of God!

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There is clearly a need in these days to protect our divine and delicate mind fabric from the blatant headlines and the subtle advertisements which stamp their impressions willy nilly upon our essential selves. If anyone be tempted to think that religion nowadays makes no heroic demands upon mankind, let him stand censor at the threshold of his own mind. Let him ask daily of the mass of newsprint and entertainment and idle comment that assails his mind, "Is this necessary to my knowledge, or to my efficiency, or to my understanding of other people?" Almost the whole of modern life is ranged against the religious man who proposes to maintain the tranquility of his mind. Yet be guardian of his own soul he must.

If at first the fight against triviality seems unending, the religious man or woman finds that to battle is to fight better, and that habit is a loyal friend. Nor does victory cut us off from our fellows. It leaves us free to appreciate their essential worth. To turn from the unessentials of human intercourse does not make us other-worldly. It enables us to appreciate the world as it is, in all the simple beauty and essential goodness that is hidden behind the garish facade we call civilization. To participate to the full in this glorious pageant of existence, we must learn the wisdom of the ages, for "the unclouded mind . . . is a mirror of earth and heaven. It is the glass for all things".

It is at this point that we at last discover opportunity to do what we have always meant to do, to read a few good books and ponder them well. Once we have weaned ourselves from the ephemeral trivialities of the evening paper

we can spend our homeward journey reading a thoughtful book as it was meant to be read, a few lines of print and a few minutes of savouring their intention, as we close our eyes against the perpetual kaleidoscope about us. This is, of course, no way of catching up with our reading, as the saying is. But what use can a mind make of theories with which it is always trying to catch up? Nor does this tranquil traveller lose himself in his book. He has perhaps lost himself for a time in the whirl of his daily work. He who reads slowly finds himself at the day's end, a soul able to dwell in tranquility upon the Soul of things.

If such an one be afraid his books will tempt him to withdraw too far from the needs and necessities of human life, he might letter for himself a bookmark. On it he should write the words of Angelus Silesius:

Friend, let this be enough. If thou wouldst go on reading,
Go, and thyself become the writing and the meaning.

COMMENT

Dancing in Church

IN the most recent number of the *American Unitarian Register* is an interesting plea for the use of sacred dancing as an aid to worship. We are told that already congregations have been participating in Sunday services in sacred dancing, "to express deep feelings of praise, humility and prayer in worship", whilst in some churches, "an entire congregation joins the minister in active movements of worship". There is in the United States an Eastern Regional Sacred Dance Association which holds three festivals a year in New England, and functions as a clearing-house for ideas.

The idea seems to be derived from the Greek chorus, as a rhythmic motion choir, rather than the Old Testament precedents. When David danced before the Lord "he danced with all his might", giving the idea of wild abandon, often associated with the erotic fertility rites derived from the original agricultural inhabitants of Palestine. That is, no doubt, why later references to dancing in the Bible are confined to its use as an expression of joy. As Greek drama showed, rhythmic dancing is not inconsistent with the expression of the most solemn ideas, but the interposition of some centuries of puritanic ideas on the subject of dancing—not only in modern times—makes it difficult for us to feel at home with that kind of expression of our religious faith. We owe a debt, however, to those who are attempting to adapt all the arts to the service of religion; the effort is one with which theological colleges must sooner or later collaborate.

Great Cities

We have for so long—all our lives, in fact—regarded London as the greatest city in the world that it will shock some people to know that London's population has been outstripped by Tokio, the capital of Japan. Most of us, no doubt, have long felt that London is far too large and that our national life would be healthier if so great a proportion of our people were not the inhabitants of great cities, and there has been a very active policy of moving tens of thousands of people from the great cities and establishing them in smaller communities elsewhere.

There comes a time when great size introduces almost insuperable administrative problems into cities. Cowley wrote that God made the first garden, Cain the first city, and he did not mean to be complimentary. Cities, however, have become in many instances plague spots simply because man is only now realizing the part he has to play in making cities fit to live in. It is no mere accident that the words "city" and "civilization" come from the same root, and human life in towns that are built and organized for good living can reach its highest level. History has debunked much of the innocence and freedom that people often associate with the idea of the country, and whether we like it or not, the mechanization of farming will make it impossible for any of the quarter of a million people added every year to our population to find a home and employment in the country. Therefore we shall not worry if cities in other lands surpass London or any other of our cities; it is the quality and not the size of a city that counts.

A Time for Generous Aid

The Afro-Asian Congress at Cairo will undoubtedly have considerable influence on uninformed public opinion in the member states, not by any means all of which were represented by their governments. Russia, it seemed, had things all her own way; but the practical measures that can be expected to flow from the conference are somewhat uncertain. There must, for example, be many besides Mr. Nehru who are uneasy at events in Indonesia, the unrest in which is an invitation to such a power as Russia to embark on political adventures in South-East Asia. Indian traders, too, are very much alive to the danger that unrest in Indonesia jeopardizes that flow of industrial investment towards which India looks to help her to carry through her development plans. Sooner or later these "Afro-Asian" nations will be forced to realize that even Russia can't forever be conferring gifts, and must seek mutual advantage if assistance is to be adequate. No other nation, indeed, is in the position of the United States as a potential helper of these under-developed nations, whether by aid, or, preferably, trade; but it is up to other Western powers to contribute to such development in proportion to their means. This is, one might say, the hinge on which the future of world peace and progress depend.

Another Weekly Gone

When I was a boy one of the best-known men in Britain was H. D. Labouchère, the founder and editor, eighty years ago, of the weekly paper, "Truth". Latterly, this paper is said to have been run at a loss, and the death of the owner made its disappearance inevitable, although lately it seems to have improved its circulation considerably. It is one more weekly gone, to the loss of British public life, for it was noted for a distinctive contribution to journalism. There still remain the two giant weeklies, but the number of small, independent papers is being painfully reduced.

Commentator.

SEEN FROM THE BATH

By David Milne

LYING in the hostel bath my eye was caught by a slogan daubed on the wall in yellow oil-paint.

It read: "One Church, No Faith, No God". When I had controlled my laughter, I began to think. What precisely does Church, Faith and God mean to me?

If Church is used in the sense "a place wherein God is worshipped" then it means little. If it denotes "a place wherein people gather to worship and give praise" then it becomes meaningful. For, in the former, there is the danger of coming to believe that only in a Church is God to be found. In pre-exilic days the Jews confined God to the temple in Jerusalem. Do we sometimes so confine him? Rather do I seek him through Nature, Art and Human relationships. None give a direct answer, but all point the direction. Those who sit around me every Sunday I regard as fellow travellers: met together to give expression to all that they have found in the week gone by and using the opportunity to check their compasses.

There *is* one Church—for we are all travellers through Life. Destroy every Church, destroy every building—then we will still meet under the sky—the roof of the One Church.

Faith is a word I have always been frightened of. In the past it has been handed to me in return for a "why". How strong is the life that has been built on the foundation of "I have faith that God exists?" Rather do I respond to those who *know*, and are aware of the folly of attempting to communicate that experience in words rather than deeds—deeds that spring spontaneously from a heart that has been "strangely warmed". I have a friend who is proud of the fact that his life has been built on a foundation of faith—that God does *not* exist!

In short, I have no place for the word faith: unless faith it is that impels a migratory bird to start its journey.

No God? On paper, as likely as not. But a set of beliefs (not to be confused with "faith" as used above) that rest upon such a debatable proposition, cannot be more than a scaffolding—outer structure that must be removed if the building is to be seen as it was intended to be seen. God is a symbol for that which we are all capable of experiencing, even though it be fleeting, dim or unrecognized even. "But", some will object, "that's not God!"

If not, then the slogan on the wall was not a gibe but an affirmation.

A Message From Hungary

In addition to a letter similar to that printed in our correspondence columns from Hungary, the Rev. John Kielty, Secretary of the General Assembly of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, has received the following message: "On the occasion of the General Assembly meeting of the Unitarian Church of Hungary, held on December 19 at Budapest, we all the undersigned have pleasure in sending to you and the Unitarian Church of England, and particularly to your president, our warmest greetings".

The message ends with sixty signatures.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer", 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C. 1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

Sputnik And All That

SIR,—Like Mr. Malbon, I quite bluntly believe that war is suicide, and that there would be no victor or vanquished. As far as the individual Christian is concerned, there is but one way: that of pacifism. This is not, however, a Christian country. The world is not Christian, and to walk round with that assumption is to walk round with blinkers on.

While we may well be overrun by the Russians, while the Communist theories may be forced on the world, it does not follow that we should agree with them. I do not accept the view that it is a "holier than thou" view to express a belief in the fundamentals of the democratic idea or to point out where Communism in action is a flat contradiction of what true Communism is supposed to be.

Of course Communists are human beings. Who has denied it? So are Americans. At present, I don't have to agree with either. If to save one's skin one has to say, "The government is right", nothing is really going to make one believe it.

As I see it, it is on the clash of ideas progress has been made. If the whole world goes Communist, it does not follow that the theory be right. The conflict of idea between Communism and what loosely is called democracy will go on.

As I see it, not in my time but one day the Communist world will go through the same search for individual liberty that the Western world passed through in the nineteenth century.

If the whole world be Communist, it remains inevitable that man's search for mental freedom will find its expression in the Communist world and take its shape in political forms. Not even the Nazis wiped out the power of thought, and men will continue thinking, come what may.

Put the world under one government, share out the world's resources between haves and have-nots, and there will still be a conflict of ideas on how to use the world's resources, although there may be an absence of war. And nothing Mr. Malbon says or I say will alter that, for since the first primitive man started to argue about how to make fire, men have disagreed.

In matters concerned with religion, we are concerned with fundamentals. The lack of vision of our leaders and the lack of principle behind much so-called anti-Communism is not relevant to this discussion.

The issue before us is quite simple: Do we think the one-party totalitarian state is the best for the fullest development of the human spirit or don't we?—Yours,

Newcastle-under-Lyme. *R. D. Woodall.*

Not The Time For Mystical Flower Gardens

SIR,—Surely the conclusions to be drawn from the unreality of the NATO conference and that of the men of the Kremlin are the very opposite of those drawn in your article, "The Heart of It"? It is not facts but idealism divorced from facts which leaves our world in the state it is in today. In the face of the threat of nuclear warfare, isn't it time we realized that such things as "freedom" and "democracy" and "communism" have no existence apart from people. Nuclear war will destroy the whole basis of such ideals; if any life survives it, it will by all accounts be such that it will be quite incapable of conceiving such ideals. Pure idealism which presumes to stand above fact has, it seems to me, been clearly debunked by the nuclear age. Our politicians are not realists but idealists of a particularly dangerous type.

God does not care unless we do. There is no personal God or Being apart from persons. Even the Book of Common Prayer affirms that in Art. I.

Faith does not destroy facts; it finds a way of living with them. Orthodox Christianity is a means of evading them; what it made of Gethsemane and the Cross and the supposed Resurrection was a major misfortune for mankind. If it had not been for the basic pagan realities behind the Christian festivals, there would be no point in celebrating them in a Unitarian church.

Of course, the truth of the imagination is not necessarily a truth of actual historical detail, but it is not a truth of some self-subsisting "spiritual" or idealistic entity either. Men of good will must work out their own salvation, in full view of the fact that there is absolutely nothing which cannot be destroyed. This is no time for cultivating a private mystical flower garden.—Yours,

Ipswich. *Nicholas J. Teape.*

[Mr. Teape regards as fact that there is "absolutely nothing which cannot be destroyed". Against such fact the whole weight of religion has been flung, and, if the judgement is to be made on the basis of the welfare of mankind, then with the consequent result of mankind's welfare. We do not know what a "self subsisting 'spiritual' or idealistic entity" is. It sounds like nothing, and such it must appear to Mr. Teape. Since he has plucked this flower from a "private mystical flower garden", which, no doubt, he regards as nothing also, he seems to have gone trespassing in some odd places.—EDITOR.]

The Death of Jesus

SIR,—I was moved to some expostulation with the Answer under "Why and Wherefore" last week (page 429). There is much more to the hypothesis that Jesus did not die on the cross than was allowed by your contributor. I don't know what he means by the tradition of Joseph of Arimathea and the empty tomb being "late", except that there is no explicit reference in Paul to it. The Marcan story is quite feasible: A man in white waiting at the tomb to give a message. The second objection suggesting that the disciples were guilty of a palpable fraud if Jesus had not died on the cross is quite unconvincing. In view of Luke 24, vv. 39-43, and other *physical* reappearances recorded, it seems the most reasonable assumption that Jesus had not died on the cross, but that the disciples, who apparently also believed in the resurrection of Lazarus, would have no difficulty in believing that Jesus had himself died and come to life again. Without our factual, scientific understanding of death, the disciples would naturally believe in a miraculous reanimation of the corpse—and continue so to believe even after Jesus had finally withdrawn himself from them. It is not at all impossible that Pilate himself connived at the saving of Jesus's life. The plea of his wife, his attempts to release Jesus, the private understanding he must have had with Joseph of Arimathea, and that the centurion must have been under special orders not to break the bones of Jesus's body, all suggest an attempt to save his life in spite of the Sanhedrin, the crowd, and Jesus's own preparedness for death. The absence of the guard and the rolled-back stone at the tomb merely add to the feasibility of this supposition. It may be considered "pure speculation" by those who believe in the miraculous physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, but surely not by Unitarians, who have always doubted a physical resurrection.

It still remains, however, that the empty tomb is a problem for Unitarians—though not for orthodox Christians, who believe in the physical resurrection. We have never seemed to face this problem squarely.—Yours,

Bolton. *E. Stowell-Price.*

SIR,—I cannot agree with the answer in "Why and Wherefore" as to the question concerning the death of Jesus on the cross. On the evidence of the gospel narratives, there is surely a possibility that Jesus revived. The French critic Goguel gives a number of arguments to support this. As to Christ's burial, a wealthy convert could have secured his body as a favour. The vivid account of the meal of honey and broiled fish and the exhibition of the wounds are suggestive of a veridical physical appearance rather than of a spiritual one.

If Jesus did not die, the guilt of a palpable fraud does not, of necessity, belong to him or his followers. In that day and age they might well have thought his resuscitation a miracle. As for the absence of non-Christian imputations as to the reality of his death, it is well known that such evidence is scanty because the triumphant Church destroyed the works of her defeated enemies. We only know of the arguments of Celsus from the writings of Origen. Anyhow, at a time when the re-appearance of Jesus would have been deemed a miracle, it is hardly likely that non-Christian writers would have preferred to suggest this rather than make the more damaging imputation of fraud.—Yours,

Wells, Somerset. *Margaret Sherman.*

"Agreeing With Thine Adversary . . ."

SIR,—In reply to Mary Barfield, I think it makes a horrible situation worse to add death to it. I am no George Washington, and my "dishonour" is a small price to pay for a continuing chance to combat the evil of persecution.

We none of us *know* the truth about God: we are all speculating. I can say yes to Catholic belief in the existence of God, and be generous enough to acknowledge that their guess may be as good as mine as to God's nature, with the reservation that if they are right I am not enamoured of the truth!

My convictions lie not in the unknowable truth about God but in human rights, and I am not furthering those by allowing myself to become the victim of human wrong. If Jesus had any option, I would rather he had chosen to live and continue to exert his benign influence on the world. The fate of his person, either way, does not affect the significance as I see it of his message.—Yours,

Exeter. *Enid Shears.*

THE INQUIRER

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NEWS REVIEW

From The Consistory of The Unitarian Church of Hungary

Dear Brethren,

At the beginning of the New Year of 1958, we take the opportunity to greet you heartily on behalf of the Consistory of the Unitarian Church of Hungary, as well as on behalf of the parishes, their pastors and believers, praying God, the Father of Mankind, to grant you and your parishioners a happy New Year.

We Unitarians feel that we received a special task from God which ought to be fulfilled. In this consideration, as conscientious men, we should commence the year of 1958, to support every thought and good idea which is deepening the fraternal relations among nations and people. We should join with those who do their best to preserve the peace of this world and oppose them who are strengthening the tensions.

The Kingdom on earth could be realized by people of goodwill. We Unitarians are the present-day representatives of Jesus' Gospel. We are responsible that there should be harmony between this Gospel and life.

In this spirit we greet you and with you all mankind, praying that God may grant peace this world.

With brotherly love,

Faithfully yours,

[The letter is signed by the Deputy Bishop, two Chief Curators, the Secretary, and the Chief Notary.—Editor.]

Cardiff: On the evening of Tuesday, December 10, a Recognition service for the Rev. Roy John was held at West Grove Church, Cardiff. The devotions were taken by the Rev. Hubert Philipps and the Rev. S. E. Bowen delivered the address. The service was followed by an excellent supper and a social hour in the School-room. During the course of the evening, a presentation of a Wedgwood vase was made to the Rev. and Mrs. John as a token of appreciation of their earnest loyalty during the two and a half years they have been in Cardiff. E. M. Evans.

Rochdale: A full and well-balanced Christmas programme was successfully carried out by the Unitarians of Rochdale. On Sunday, December 22, morning service was held as usual, when after appropriate prayers, lesson, hymns and canticle, the minister, the Rev. F. W. Barr, preached a sermon in which he stressed the importance of making the festive season a time of spiritual renewal and rededication.

At the parents and scholars service in the afternoon, the carol-singing was led by the Rochdale Borough Youth Prize Band. This was the first time a brass band has played in the church, and it proved a great attraction. Lessons were read by Miss Judith Heyes, a primary teacher, and two of the scholars, Doreen Spencer and Susan Shotton.

In the evening a carol service was held which included a Nativity tableau, produced by Mrs. F. W. Barr. The part of Mary was played by Miss Doreen Stott, one of the senior scholars; Joseph, by Mr. Tom Barlow; the Wise Men and Shepherds by the Sunday School secretary, Mr. Eric Ashworth, members of the Young Men's Class, and two boys from the School, Alan Metcalfe and Eric Stocks.

Special lighting had been installed in the chancel, in which stood the manger on a straw-strewn floor. As the tableau gradually took shape, the choir, under Mr. Frank Nuttall, sang the Magnificat. Then in darkness relieved only by the light of candles and the illuminated Christmas tree, choir and congregation sang "Silent Night".

The Church, one of the most beautiful in Rochdale, had been attractively decorated, and as the many members and visitors who had attended the service dispersed it was felt that all the work and preparations had been well worth while.

On the evening of Christmas Eve, two Communion services were held at 7 p.m. and 11.30 p.m. Age groups at both were well represented, and in all fifty Communicants were present. At 11 o'clock on Christmas morning, another good congregation assembled for the Family Service.

Sheffield: Unity Church: A few weeks ago the congregation paid tribute to Mr. C. H. Dolphin for his services as Church Treasurer over a period of thirty-two years. A son of the manse, Mr. Dolphin came to Sheffield in 1902, when his father, the late Rev. A. H. Dolphin, moved from Leigh to Upperthorpe Chapel, Unity Church's forerunner. For over half a century he has served his church in a variety of ways, despite the demands of high office in the English Steel Corporation, and has also been an active worker on behalf of the District Association. He is a past-president of the Association, his term of office covering the period during which the General Assembly annual meetings were held in Sheffield in 1946. On the Minister's Eighth Anniversary Sunday in November, the congregation honoured Mr. Dolphin at an evening social hour. On behalf of the members and friends, the minister presented to him a gold wristlet watch, a cheque, and a book inscribed with the names of well-wishers; and Mrs. Dolphin was the recipient of a bouquet of flowers. Dr. Edward Bramley (Chairman of Trustees), Mr. Albert Hartley (Church Secretary), and Mr. Arnold Graves (Church Treasurer) spoke in appreciation of Mr. Dolphin's devoted service, and Miss A. Short, a former Church Secretary, prevented by illness from being present, sent her good wishes by letter. Mr. Dolphin continues to serve the congregation as Chairman of Committee, and is but one example of the faithful service rendered by many good lay people in our group of churches.

(Continued on page 16)

CHURCH FURNISHINGS & STAINED GLASS WINDOWS
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THE CALENDAR OF THE CHURCHES

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1958

ABERDEEN, Unitarian Church, Rosemount Place, 11 and 6, Supply
ABERYSTWYTH, New Street Meeting House, 11, Mr. ALWYN T. NICHOLAS
ALTRINCHAM, Dunham Road Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. ARTHUR W. WALLACE
ARMAGH, Unitarian Church, Edward Street, 11.15 and 3, Rev. R. ORR
ASTLEY, Unitarian Church, Manchester Road, 6.30, Mr. J. BARRY
BATH, Trim Street Church, Unitarian, 6.30, Rev. [illegible]
BELFAST, All Souls, Elmwood Avenue, 11.30 and 8, Dr. A. L. ARMOUR
BELFAST, First Church, Rosemary Street, 11.30 and 7, Dr. R. J. McLACHLAN
BELFAST, Unitarian Church, Strandtown, 11, Rev. R. TAYLOR
BILLERICAY, First Church, High Street, 11, Rev. J. MARTIN HALL
BIRKENHEAD, Unitarian Church, Scarborough Road, 6.30 (January 19), Dr. S. J. EDWARDS
BIRMINGHAM, Church of Messiah, Broad Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. GORDON STANLEY SPENCER
BIRMINGHAM, Worship Road Church, and Stone Street Mission, Small Heath, 6.30, Rev. RONALD McCRAVEY
BLACKPOOL, North Shore, Dickson Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Mr. R. A. WAY
BLACKPOOL, South Shore, Lytham Road, 11 and 6.30, Supply
BOLTON, Bank Street, 2.30, Sunday School; 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. E. GRIFFELL PRICE
BOLTON, Unity Church, Deane Road, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. ARTHUR J. LEWIS
BOSTON (Lincs.), Unitarian Church, Spain Lane, 6.30, Rev. SIDNEY HALL
BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West Hill Road, 11, Rev. LAWRENCE HAWKEN
BRADFORD, Bowling Avenue, 3.15, Supply
BRADFORD, Town Hall Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. FRANK A. BALLARD
BRIGHTON, Christ Church, Dorothy Street, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Mr. WRIGHT
BRIGHTON, Unitarian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. G. RAYMOND JONES
BRISTOL, Christ Church (Unitarian), New Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. JOHN ROWLAND
BRISTOL, Lewin's Mead Meeting, 6.30, Rev. A. H. SHELLEY
BRISTOL, Oakfield Road, 11, Rev. A. R. BRIDGE, 6.30, Miss F. BRADFIELD
BURNLEY, Unitarian Church, Trafalgar Street, 3, Rev. L. HALLWORTH
BURY, Bank Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. F. M. BYRD
CAMBRIDGE, Mansfield Church, Emmanuel Road, 11 and 6, Rev. H. STANLEY CARTER
CARDIFF, The West Grove Unitarian Church, 3.30, Welsh, 6.30, Rev. RHYS JAMES
CHATTERIS, The Church of the Great Commission, Hansard Mill, 3, Rev. WILL HAYES
CHELTENHAM, Parkhill Unitarian Church, Royal Well, 11, Sunday Services, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. J. M. QUINN
CHESTER, Matthew Henry's Chapel, Tower Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. I. A. GIBBES
CHESTERFIELD, Elder Yard Church, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. HUGH HUNT
CHESTERTON, Chapel, Ashcroft, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. KENNETH TWEED
CHIRK, Free Christian Church, South Street, 6.30, Supply
CHORLEY, Unitarian Church, Hermitage Street, 11 and 6.30, Mrs. M. R. DIXON
CHORLEY, Free Christian Church, Wellington Road, 11, Rev. J. P. CHALLIS (also 6.30 1st Sunday in the month)
CLEE HILL, 10.45, Rev. A. R. DOWNTON, STYAL, 3, Rev. A. R. DOWNTON
CLIFTON, Wilton Street Chapel, 11, Children's Church, 6.30, Rev. PERCY COWLES
CLIFTON, Pelter Grove Unitarian Church, 6.30, Supply
COCKERMOUTH, Old Meeting House, 10.45, Rev. W. WARMINGTON
COCKERMOUTH, Free Christian Church, Hall Close, 11 and 6.30, Rev. G. W. PARSONS
COLNE, Albion Street, Unitarian Church, 11, Anstey Church, 6.30, Rev. PHILIP C. WARMAN
CORBY, Stephen's Green, West, 11.30 and 7.30, Rev. E. SAVILL HUSS
CORNHILL, Old Meeting House, Wrexham Street, 11 (1st and 3rd Sundays) and 6.30, Rev. HAROLD PEARCE
CROSSENS, Old Chapel, Chapel Hill, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. S. P. WORTHINGTON
CROSTON, Unitarian Church, 23 Commission Road, 11, Rev. A. E. PEARS
DARTMOUTH, St. Mary's Church, Cattle Market, 11 and 6.30, Rev. W. B. TAYLOR
DARWEN, George's Church, South Street, 6.30, Rev. Dr. F. D. MacLEAN-ELLIOTT
DAY CROSS, Hyde Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. HENRY SMITH
DERBY, St. Werburgh Street, Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. JOHN CARLISLE
DEVIZES, Bowyer Street, 3, Rev. J. M. QUINN
DEWSBURY, Ward Street Church, 11.15, Rev. E. HOPE CHAPP
DISS, Mere Church, Hide Street, 10.45, Mr. J. W. Simpson, 6.30, Rev. A. R. DOWNTON
DORKING, Pixham End, 10.45, Rev. J. E. Wynne, 6.30, Mr. David Chapin
DOVER, Free Christian Church, South Terrace, 11 and 6.30, Rev. DOUGLAS MORTON
DROYLSDEN, Gorse Meeting, Ryders Lane, 11 and 6, Supply
DUDLEY, Wolverhampton Road, 6.30, Rev. J. H. EVANS, Hall
DUMFRIES, Friendship House, 6.30, Rev. J. R. TOWERS
DUNDEE, Park Street Church (Unitarian), 6.30, Rev. Bryner Pugh
EASTON, Mission Room, Unitarian Church, 6.30, Mr. T. WARING
EDINBURGH, New Meeting House, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Bishop W. HILL
EGREMONT, South Street Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. ANDREW SMITH
ELLESMERE, St. Nicholas Street Church, 6.30, Supply
ELLESMERE PORT, Hill Chapel, City Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. R. L. GILLARD
ELLESMERE, Wadsworth Road, 11, Senior Church, 6.30, Mr. C. V. WATSON
ELLESMERE, The Green Meeting, Ruth Lane, 11 and 6.30, Rev. LAWRENCE MARSH
ELLESMERE, Sermons, Who? By Hearers, Editors, Guild Road, 11, —
ELLESMERE, Glasgow Church, 11, Mr. J. WILSON
ELLESMERE, High Street, Unitarian Church, 6.30, Rev. H. G. ENGLEDOW
ELLESMERE, Unitarian Church of Presbyterian, 11 and 6.30, Dr. P. H. THOMAS
ELLESMERE, Bowdon Free Church, 11, Rev. H. GRIFFITH
ELLESMERE, Brunswick Mission, Mill Street, 6.30, Rev. I. KEITH MOFFAT
ELLESMERE, Gateacre Chapel, 11, Rev. RICHARD H. SHEPPARD
ELLESMERE, Grafton Road, Wavertree, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. N. EMLYN-JONES
ELLESMERE, Hope Street, 6.30, Rev. C. A. BEALE
ELLESMERE, Lodge Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. B. SQUIRE
ELLESMERE, Mill Street, Toxteth Park, 6, Rev. WALTER LLOYD
ELLESMERE, Mosley Hill Road, Unitarian and Stanhope Street Chapel, 6.30, Rev. J. P. CHALLIS
ELLESMERE, Oxton Road, 11, Rev. E. G. LEE
ELLESMERE, Renshaw Street Church, Notting Hill Gate, 11, Rev. Gordon Stanley Spencer
ELLESMERE, Rowen Gate, Upton Lane, 6.30, Mr. T. E. Shorrock
ELLESMERE, Seaforth Green, Moss Lane, 11 and 6.30, Rev. R. C. TOWNSEND
ELLESMERE, Shaftesbury, New Chapel, Pitt Church, Chatham Place, 6.30, Rev. RALPH E. GRAHAM-GILL, 11, no Sunday in the month)
ELLESMERE, Shrewsbury, Dundas Hill, 11, Rev. Bishop P. Hiley
ELLESMERE, Shrigley Hill Unitarian Church, 11, Mr. Basil Knowles
ELLESMERE, Silcoat, High Road, 11, Mr. T. E. Shorrock, 6.30, Dr. Dinsmore Tenney
ELLESMERE, Silcoat, Silver Street, Preston Hall, 6.30, Rev. A. V. Pitt
ELLESMERE, Silcoat, Unitarian Christian Church, Gore Road, 11, Rev. A. V. Pitt
ELLESMERE, Southport, Unitarian Church, High Street, 11, Rev. F. Bowman
ELLESMERE, Stockport, Low Hey Road, Bramhall Green, 6.30, Miss M. K. Cooper
ELLESMERE, Stockport, Unitarian Church, Hallcar Green, 6.30, Mr. W. F. Tomkinson
ELLESMERE, Stockport, Wycliffe Church, Hempshaw Road, 11, Rev. L. A. Cottrell

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Marriage

Bridgwater—Pearson—On January 4, 1958, at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead, by the Rev. Donald Maw, William Rex Bridgwater to Hope Fellows Pearson, the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Pearson.

Change of Address

Rev. W. H. Cordell from January 8 to Milford House, 11 North Road, Glossop, Derbyshire. Telephone: Glossop 2954.

(*Continued from page 14*)

Hyde: Flowery Field: The past year has been one of steady progress at Flowery Field Church, Hyde. Membership and attendances at worship have greatly increased, the average attendances at ordinary services being 120-130, whilst Sunday School membership has more than trebled. New organizations started include the Children's Church, with its own committee and officers, Brownies, Scouts, U.Y.P.L., and the Men's Fellowship, all of which are thriving. The publication of a new monthly youth magazine, "Good Companions", towards the end of the year has met with an enthusiastic reception and a steadily-increasing circulation.

Special services have included a Marriage Thanksgiving Service, which attracted a congregation of almost 400, together with widespread Press comment. Special services have been conducted by Dr. Alfred Hall, Revs. Dudley Richards and John Kielty, and again there were large congregations. A three-day "Exhibition of Human Rights" in the autumn proved to be a worthwhile venture.

The annual Spring Fair raised the sum of £235 in aid of the Holt Radium Institute research work, and the annual Christmas Fair the all-time record of over £625 for church funds. In the immediate future a new pipe organ and Communion Rail are to be installed, and it is hoped that these will be completed soon after Easter, 1958. A Garden of Remembrance in the church grounds is also contemplated. Members are looking forward to another vigorous and active year.

Deaths

Carter—On December 27 at Brookbridge, Wisborough, after a short illness, Maud Emma Alice Carter, aged 89 years. Member of Billingshurst Congregation.

Webster—At 195 Manchester Road, Accrington, on December 26, George Benson Webster, age 46, younger son of Alfred Webster and the late Edith A. Webster.

Miles Gerrard

The passing of Miles Gerrard from the familiar scene in Bank Street Chapel, Bolton, and Sunday School means the passing of one whose straightness of character and kindliness of heart have cast a lustre over our worship, our work, and our play for many decades. He never sought influence in public affairs, though his kindly concern for his fellow-townsmen led him to seek their welfare in the Guild of Help and as Chairman of the Infirmary Extension. But it was in Bank Street Chapel that his devotion lay throughout the years. No layman could have deeper concern for the well-being of our Chapel and all the folk who gathered here, especially in times of difficulty and trial. Countless have been his visits to the homes of those in trouble, and countless his quiet deeds of Christian charity and goodwill. He was, indeed, God's Gentleman, and his memory will ever be a sweet and wholesome thing to recall.

He *died* at his home, "Rydal Mount", on December 3, aged 83 years. His funeral and cremation service were, by his own wish, private to his family circle. We tried to make our service to his memory on December 15 worthy of the great soul whose earthly days brought so much happiness and won such warm affection in all our hearts.

E.S.P.

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